

Children

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Montreal Granville, a case manager (L) and Patrick Floyd, a proctor parent, both work for Morrison Child and Family Services. They attended the conference to learn, they said, and planned to attend a session on healing trauma in teens.

children were killed by family members in 2010. Yet data shows that putting children in foster care often fails to stop the cycle of abuse. Frequent moves, failed placements, broken family attachments and abuse within the system can traumatize children further, according to outcome studies by the Annie E. Casey Family Foundation.

Children of Color

More African American and Native American children go into foster care. They also stay longer. Efforts are underway to keep more children with their biological families, but the figures remain daunting, and Portland's Native American children and African American children hit hardest. According to a state task force that reported this year:

"About 20 percent of all children in fos-

ter care during the study period were children of color, despite the fact that children of color make up only 11 percent of Oregon's general child population. American Indian/Alaskan Native children were more than five times more likely, and African American children two times more likely, to be represented in Oregon's foster care population than in Oregon's general population."

Cahn said three factors contribute to the disproportionate numbers of children of color in care: individual bias; institutional bias and poverty. Nationally, children's advocates want to change child welfare policies and provide more support to birth families.

"Our families need housing, jobs, and access to drug treatment, mental health counseling, food and transportation," she said. "Too many of our children and mothers don't get the help they need. And we know there are too much untreated trauma, untreated mental illness and untreated sub-



Among those attending the foster care conference were Eva Williams (L) and Alise Sanchez from NAYA, the Native American Youth and Family Center

'Friggin' Awesome'



Author and filmmaker Michael Moore spoke at Occupy Portland on Oct. 31, encouraging protestors. "You don't know how friggin' awesome this is," he said. "Portland, Portland, Portland! This is the seat of our new democracy!"

stance abuse."

The state task force on the issue and a 2011 Multnomah County workgroup report both set targets and outlined plans for reducing those numbers. Cahn noted that one example of efforts to remove institutional bias is a move to treat parents who have crack convictions in the same way as parents who have abused cocaine. Famously, Black Americans have been charged and labeled as felons for crack abuse, when cocaine abusers, more likely to be White, have received lesser penalties.

Generational Impact

Tuesday's panel discussion showed how the foster care system can amplify family trauma and keep generations of families stuck in the system.

Briggs, who is white, told how she went into foster care when she was 8 years old because her father was in prison and her mother was a meth and later a heroin addict. After watching a television program about HIV and AIDS, Briggs told her mother that her grandmother's partner was sexually abusing her. Child welfare got involved and Briggs was placed in foster care. An untreated addict, her mother never regained

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Shelter

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works to set up homeless men and women with jobs and provides a space for homeless children and their families.

"Homelessness has increased especially in East Portland and East Multnomah County," says DeMaster.

She pointed out that they have a Warming Center on 125th and Halsey, which relies on public donations, most of which have come from faith organizations. The center has cots for families to sleep on but it can't provide pillows and blankets unless people donate money.

Human Solutions has also opened up the 60-bed Family Winter Shelter at East Presbyterian Church and the eight-bed Common Cup Shelter at the Sunnyside United Methodist Church.

Other year-round services include the Goose Hollow Family Shelter, operated by Portland Homeless Family Solutions, Human Solutions Daybreak Shelter Network, and My

Father's House and My Sister's House in Gresham.

Services for homeless families with children are available at the day shelter at 13 Salmon Family Center, and the day facility at the Daybreak Shelter. Additional housing placement is provided by Human Solutions.

Following DeMaster's presentation, a formerly homeless woman named Georgina

'Homelessness has increased especially in East Portland and East Multnomah County'

--Jean DeMaster

gave testimony on her experiences with

Multnomah County and the Family Shelter-to-Housing Partnership.

She says she met a lot of volunteers who worked with her family and even helped her kids with homework.

"I learned how to see credit, do background checks and fill out applications for landlords," she says. "I also built friendships that will last forever."

The woman said her family would be moving into an apartment the next day. She pledged to come back and volunteer.

Multnomah County Commissioner Deborah Kafoury said that the county added \$1.6 million for families in crisis.

"Critics complain that governments shouldn't interfere," says Kafoury. "I disagree. It is our role to help families find stability."

Sally Erickson, the Ending Homelessness Initiative manager of the Portland Housing Bureau, noted that

the government can't take on homelessness alone. She emphasized that people vote on initiatives affecting homeless families.

Erickson says that there will be a big job ahead for Portland this winter. Shelters are opening early in preparation for the cold weather.

Erickson notes that shelter beds have almost doubled since 2004 and that the coalition has managed to help more than 7,000 families get off the street since the 2010 program.

"I grew up in the 60s," says Erickson. "It has not always been like this."

A Homeless Day of Awareness is set for Nov. 15 from 7-8:30 a.m. at the Downtown Chapel.

Liesl Wendt, the CEO of 211 Info, says that among the many services the group's telephone referrals offer is help with transportation.

She says 211 Info's website, www.211info.org, is constantly updating information on available beds as well.

Symposium

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beyond will consider these questions in a series of panel discussions and lectures.

Keynote Speakers include:

Gary Younge, the Chicago-based columnist for The Guardian, a highly respected British news source. Younge will speak about differences in the Occupy movement at home and abroad. Nov. 9 at 7 p.m.

Geneva Gay, an award-winning professor from the University of Washington, Seattle,

will speak about what's NOT working in multicultural education. Nov. 10 at 7 p.m.

Gary Okihiro, one of the founders of the field of ethnic studies will speak to the future of these specialized departments. Nov. 10 at 7 p.m.

Jan Campbell from Portland's new Office of Equity and Jilma Meneses, PSU's first chief diversity officer, will be part of the panel Beyond the Word: Exploring the

Meaning of Multiculturalism Today. Nov. 9 at 3:30 p.m.

Karen "Kemi" Coutinho, student, accomplished playwright and coordinator of the symposium's Race Monologues,

which explore race, ethnicity and identity through poetry and prose. Nov. 11 at 7 p.m.

Don't miss this chance to see a student-curated art exhibition built around the theme mul-ti-cul-tur-al-ism: defined, It fea-

tures work by campus and community artists. All events are free and open to the public. For a complete schedule, visit www.lclark.edu.